

VZCZCXRO5003

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA
RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHRS RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHMO #1021/01 1111122
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 211122Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2988
INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4479
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4248
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2782
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0482

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001021

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [KNNP](#) [OREP](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL LEVIN MEETS MARGELOV -- MD, Iran, Afghanistan, DPRK,
NPT, Sudan

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In an April 14 meeting with CODEL Levin, Russian Federation Council International Relations Committee Chair Mikhail Margelov said momentum on missile defense had been lost when the U.S. did not take up Russia on its offer on using the Gabala and Armavir radar stations, but stated that Russia's military experts were ready to propose some "realistic options" for the creation of a joint missile defense shield. He described Russia's suspension of the transfer of S-300 missiles to Iran as a "strong signal" to Teheran, but urged that the U.S. could make it stronger by responding positively to the Russian overture. Arguing that sanctions were ineffective, Margelov suggested that jointly developing a "Marshall Plan" to revive Afghanistan's economy could serve as an example to Iran to seek Western integration, while reiterating Russia's position that Iran could develop a civil nuclear program, as long as it accepted to "play by the IAEA's rules." Margelov criticized the DPRK for "not understanding Russia and China's charitable approach" in preventing a UN Security Council Resolution condemning the recent North Korean missile launch, and urged the U.S. to press China to share its intelligence on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. In order to improve U.S.-Russia relations, Margelov advocated for an intensified meeting schedule, the renewal of the START and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties, the reduction of anti-Russian tendencies in "New Europe," and cooperation in Sudan and Somalia. End summary.

Missile Defense

¶2. (SBU) In an April 14 meeting with Russian Federation Council Internal Relations Committee Chair Mikhail Margelov, Senators Carl Levin (D-Mi) and Bill Nelson (D-Fl) noted the U.S. interest in cooperating with Russia on missile defense (MD), but cautioned Margelov that Bush administration commitments to the Czech Republic and Poland could not simply be laid aside. Margelov responded that momentum on MD had been lost when the U.S. did not take Russia up on its offer to include the Gabala and Armavir radar stations in the MD effort. However, he said working together on MD was "a must," and stated that Russia's military experts were now ready to propose new options for a joint missile shield.

Iran nuclear program

¶3. (SBU) Margelov underscored that Russia agreed with the U.S. on the substance of rejecting a nuclear-armed Iran, even though the GOR differed on the method of achieving that goal. He said Russia had made an important political decision to work with the U.S. when it sent the Iranian Defense Minister home without S-300 missiles, even though it was a defensive system. This had sent a strong signal to

the U.S. Margelov confirmed that the suspension of the S-300 sale was "firm," but said it could be firmer still if the U.S. made a positive response. Otherwise, it would be viewed in Moscow as another example of Russia "moving one step forward," with no corresponding acknowledgment by Washington.

¶4. (SBU) Noting articles reporting President Medvedev's "surprise" at the progress of Iran's nuclear program, as expressed to President Obama and Henry Kissinger, Senator Levin asked why the U.S. had to persuade Russia to adopt a stronger position in the UN even though Iran posed a greater threat to Russia, due to its proximity. Margelov responded that both Prime Minister Putin and Medvedev had repeatedly stated they "would not accept", "not be happy with," and "not allow" a nuclear-armed Iran, but argued that sanctions were ineffective.

¶5. (SBU) Responding to Senator Nelson's question how the U.S.-Russia cooperation could dissuade Iran from developing nuclear weapons, Margelov suggested that jointly solving the problems in Afghanistan and developing a "Marshall Plan" to revive that country's economy could serve as an example to Iran to seek Western integration.

¶6. (SBU) In reaction to Senator Nelson's comment on President Obama's possible acceptance of Iran's civil nuclear program under the condition that international inspections could verify no weaponization was taking place, Margelov said it had been Russia's policy for the past eight years that Iran could develop civil nuclear plants such as Bushehr, as long as it "played by the IAEA's rules."

¶7. (SBU) Noting his background in oriental studies and recent trips

MOSCOW 00001021 002 OF 002

to Egypt, Lebanon, and Qatar, Margelov said the Iraq war had deprived Iran of a counterbalance, allowing it to "do what it wanted to" with the Shia and even Hizbollah in the Middle East in its attempt to "dominate" the region. Iran was even actively supporting the Tashnak political party in Armenia. This, Margelov said, was seen by many in Russia as "an insult," since Moscow considered Armenia to be "in Russia's back yard."

DPRK Missile Launch

¶8. (SBU) Margelov criticized the DPRK for "not understanding Russia and China's charitable approach" in preventing a UN Security Council Resolution condemning the recent North Korean missile launch. Margelov said the missile launch was "more painful" for Russia due to its common border with the DPRK and memories of the last Taepo Dong launch, when the missile flew toward the coast of Russia. Margelov agreed with Senator Levin's assessment that North Korea took the international attention as a sign it could "manipulate us," and suggested the GOR should request immediate consultations with all Six-Party members and press China to share its intelligence on where the DPRK was storing its suspected nuclear warheads. However, he stated the U.S. had more levers it could apply to China than Russia. Margelov considered the South Korean government "too scared" to play a significant role.

U.S.-Russia relations: post-START, Sudan

¶9. (SBU) Margelov expressed "cautious optimism" that the change in administration in the U.S. would benefit "pragmatic" U.S.-Russia relations, and called for the development of a substantive bilateral agenda to back up the good intentions on each side. In this context he noted the upcoming visit of Senator Ben Nelson to Moscow to co-chair the next U.S.-Russian Federation Parliamentary Council meeting. Margelov advocated for the speedy resumption of "2 plus 2" talks, and underscored the need to renew the START and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaties. He urged the U.S. to work with the EU on convincing countries in "New Europe" that pro-Americanism was not equal to being anti-Russia, and commented that "while the Soviet

Union made mistakes, if we always insist on recalling history, we will come to sad conclusions." Noting his appointment as the GOR's special representative for Sudan, Margelov suggested that the U.S. and Russia work together on "failed states and continents." In addition to Sudan issues, he proposed developing a joint mechanism for maritime security to combat phenomena such as the piracy off the coast of Somalia, and suggested the U.S. and Russia should work together more on Africa issues, including Somalia generally, not just piracy.

110. (U) Codel Levin cleared this cable.

RUBIN